

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 IO-13 DHA-02 ORM-02
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6672
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6974
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4243

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, IS, XF, JO
SUBJECT: AN ISRAELI VIEW OF THE SITUATION ON THE WEST BANK

REF: A. JERUSALEM 0855
B. JERUSALEM 0856
C. TEL AVIV 4194

1. IN A CONVERSATION JUNE 13 THE DCM ASKED MOSHE SASSON,
NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, FOR
HIS IMPRESSION OF THE SITUATION ON THE WEST BANK. (SASSON
HAD BEEN FOR THREE YEARS ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER-
FIRST ESHKOL, THEN GOLDA MEIR-- ON WEST BANK AFFAIRS. AN
ARAB SCHOLAR, HE HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE THEN
MINISTER OF DEFENSE, MOSHE DAYAN.)
IN REPLY SASSON SAID THAT HE HAD NOT YET HAD AN OPPORTUNITY
TO CONULT WITH SOME OF HIS OLD WEST BANK ACQUAINTANCES
SINCE RETURNING FROM HIS POST AS AMBASSADOR TO ITALY.
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HE DID, HOWEVER, INTEND TO RENEW HIS TIES WITH THEM AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE. WITH THAT AS A CAVEAT, HE WENT ON TO
LIST WHAT HE SAID WERE "CERTAIN IMPRESSIONS" HE HAD OF
THE PRESENT SITUATION.
A. THE WEST BANKERS DO NOT WANT THE ISRAELIS THERE.
SIMPLY PUT, HE SAID, "THEY ARE NOT ZIONISTS."
B. THE WEST BANKERS FEEL THAT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO

GAIN BY ANOTHER WAR.

C. THERE IS A NATURAL AFFINITY WITH THE EAST BANK;
THIS INCLUDES FAMILY, TRADE AND OTHER TIES.

D. MOST WEST BANKERS HAVE LITTLE LOVE FOR THE PLO:
"THEY KNOW ARAFAT." (HERE HE MADE THE POINT THAT ARABS
FIGHT ARABS MORE THAN THEIR PROCLAIMED ENEMIES; IN THE
1936-39 ARAB STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BRITISH AND THE JEWS,
5,200 ARABS HAD BEEN KILLED AND ONLY A FEW DOZEN BRITISH
AND JEWS.)

E. KING HUSSEIN HAS A HALF MILLION PALESTINIANS ON
THE EAST BANK WHO ARE SILENT. UNTIL THEY SPEAK UP AND
MAKE THEIR DESIRES KNOWN, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE
WHAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AS SUCH REALLY WANT.

F. FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS THE WEST BANKERS ARE
UNDERSTANDABLY CONFUSED AND PROBABLY NOT SURE IN THEIR
OWN MINDS WHAT THEY WANT.

2. COMMENT: SASSON'S VIEWS AS GIVEN ABOVE PROBABLY
REPRESENT AS RATIONAL AN ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION ON
THE WEST BANK AS COULD BE OBTAINED FROM ANY ISRAELI
OFFICIAL. HE HAS ADMITTEDLY BEEN OUT OF TOUCH FOR A
FEW YEARS; FOR ONE THING, HE SEEMS TO UNDERESTIMATE
(PERHAPS WISHFULLY) THE EXTENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE PLO
IN THE WEST BANK, AS NOTED IN PARA 7 OF JERUSALEM'S
0855. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS CLEAR THAT UNDERLYING HIS
AND ALMOST EVERY OTHER ISRAELI COMMENT ON THE WEST
BANK SITUATION (NOT TO MENTION THOSE OF THE FUTURE
BEGIN GOVERNMENT) IS THE UNSPOKEN ASSUMPTION THAT THE
WEST BANK'S FUTURE MUST LIE IN SOME FORM OF ARRANGEMENT
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WITH EITHER ISRAEL OR JORDAN, AND HENCE THERE CANNOT BE
AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY THERE.

ALSO OF COURSE IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE SIZE AND
SHAPE OF WHAT THAT WEST BANK WOULD BE REMAINS TO BE
DETERMINED.

3. HAVING WORKED WITH DAYAN ON WEST BANK PROBLEMS IN
THE PAST, SASSON MAY AGAIN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE,
PARTICULARLY AS THE POSITIONS OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT
WITH REGARD TO THE OCCUPIED AREAS BEGIN TO DEVELOP,
ALTHOUGH HIS LESS-THAN-HAWKISH VIEWS MAY CAUSE HIM
PROBLEMS.

4. AN INTERESTING COMMENT ON THE SITUATION WAS CON-
TAINED IN AN ARTICLE BY DANI RUBENSTEIN IN DAVAR OF
JUNE 13. RUBENSTEIN SAID THAT IN THE PERIOD FROM 1948
TO 1967 WEST BANK RESIDENTS UNDERWENT WHAT COULD BE
CALLED "JORDANIZATION," A PROCESS WHICH WAS AIDED BY
THEIR NATIONAL-CULTURAL OPPRESSION. AFTER 1967 WHEN

JORDANIZATION CEASED AND THE NATIONAL-CULTURAL
OPPRESSION WAS EASED, THE RESULT, PARADOXICALLY
ENOUGH, HAD BEEN TO FUEL AN AWAKENING PALESTINIAN
NATIONALISM WITH REGARD TO ARABS ON THE WEST BANK AND
IN ISRAEL: "UNDER OUR RULE THE PLO IS GAINING FAR
MORE IN STRENGTH AND STATURE THAN IN EASTERN JORDAN
AND PERHAPS EVEN IN LEBANON AND ELSEWHERE IN THE
ARAB WORLD."
LEWIS

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